

Exhibit 40

NEWS

146 children worldwide saved in an operation targeting child abuse online

90 000 online accounts were identified internationally, 46 suspects arrested in New Zealand and more than 100 identified across the EU

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Europol supported an international investigation into tens of thousands of accounts possessing and sharing child sexual abuse material online. The operation, led by the Te Tari Taiwhenua Department of Internal Affairs, has so far involved law enforcement authorities from Australia, Austria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Slovenia, Spain, the UK and the US. The international coordination of the investigative activities facilitated the identification of a large number of individuals tied to these accounts.

The investigation was initiated in 2019, following a report from an online service provider, which indicated that a large number of offenders used the platform to exchange particularly disturbing child abuse images, including imagery depicting sadistic acts of sexual abuse of infants and children. The review of the information led to the discovery of 32 GB of files, the equivalent memory necessary to stream approximately 90 minutes of video. To date, the international investigation has led to the opening of 836 cases internationally, the arrests of 46 individuals across New Zealand, the identification of more than 100 suspects across the EU and the safeguarding of 146 children across the globe. The operational activities led to the identification of users worldwide and this information was shared with the relevant national authorities for further action. In two of the cases in Austria and Hungary, the suspects were offenders abusing their own children, who were six and eight years old respectively. Both children were subsequently safeguarded. Another investigation in Spain uncovered that the suspect possessed and disseminated child sexual exploitation material, while also filming naked and sexual images of adults without their consent. A large number of investigations are still ongoing across the EU.

Europol facilitated the exchange of information and coordinated the partner agencies. The agency also provided analytical support by cross-checking the data and providing greater detail for the investigative intelligence packages, which were then disseminated to the national law enforcement authorities participating in this operation.

Participating authorities

International and EU organisations: Europol and Interpol

EU Members States

- Austrian Criminal Police Office
- Croatian National Police
- Czech National Police
- Hellenic Police
- Hungarian National Bureau of Investigation
- Slovenian Police
- Slovakian National Police
- Spanish National Police

Third party countries

- New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs (lead agency)
- New Zealand Police
- New Zealand Customs Service
- Australian Federal Police
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Toronto Police Service/Canada
- Vancouver Police Service/Canada
- UK National Crime Agency
- US Federal Bureau of Investigation

Headquartered in The Hague, the Netherlands, we support the 27 EU Member States in their fight against terrorism, cybercrime and other serious and organised forms of crime. We also work with many non-EU partner states and international organisations. From its various threat assessments to its intelligence-gathering and operational activities, Europol has the tools and resources it

needs to do its part in making Europe safer.

Tags

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